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First Baptist Church (Shelby, NC)

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The Shelby Daily Star Feb. 26, 1972 Natural High

Marie Farrow

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PAT CHAMBERLAIN. . .
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By MARIE FARROW
Shelby High Correspondent

There's a new ministry arising in America, and some people see it gathering momentum. It's youth-to-youth, conducted by serious on-fire Christians in their teens and early twenties. It is a ministry that's not afraid to tell the "Good News" only in churches — but in the world where it counts.

In Cleveland County this new youth-to-youth ministry has become real and alive during the last months as over 200 young people have been performing "Natural High," a folk musical about God's Son.

"The whole message of the musical is to turn off to hate, prejudice, war, and killing and to turn on to love, God, peace and caring." This is a response from one of the 6,450 students in Cleveland County who have heard "Natural High."

Other students who have heard the program responded, "I hope it touched a lot of people because it sure did touch me ... I thought a little about trying to sing along, but then I decided I had better not. After awhile I decided that one bad voice wouldn't hurt ... I thought about how sometimes I would wonder what drugs would be like, but now I don't even want to know."

Another student said, "I wonder if all those people really believed in what they were singing. I wonder if they got any of the audience to believe it."

Twenty-two songs have been memorized, and over 60 hours

of rehearsals were spent learning the music and text. The lyrics and their meanings were drilled into the heart and mind of each teenager until the words he sings have become his own. Three truckloads of equipment and five buses filled with singers were transported to every high school in the county including Shelby Junior High. In answer to the question "Is it worth it — what does Natural High really mean to you?" the singers give an enthusiastic affirmative and indicate that its worth is invaluable.

"To me, being in 'Natural High' is a way of showing the joy of what Christ really is," answers Mike Bridges, who accompanies the group with an electric bass guitar. "If even one person in the stands sees one of us in Singout and sees that we're happy singing and spreading the word, he might think that's what he wants for himself. Then the whole thing will have been a success." Mike, who was baptized at the age of 12 has within the last four months, become vitally aware of what Christ can do to change and transform his life.

Teresa Wilson, a Shelby High sophomore says, "I'm in Singout because I like the music and what it says. I just believe in it — and I believe in God." "I enjoy it. It says what I would like to say if I could get up and preach," answers Rufus Stutts, drummer for the combo that provides music for the singers.

A soloist, Pat Chamberlain, states, "This kind of thing gives you a different approach to life. It makes you feel good inside to know you can spread the message this way."

Natural High

'To Turn Off To Hate, War, Bias, Killing

Susan McMurtry, who has been in all seven Singout programs during the past four years says she has become stronger by singing in these musicals. One very important reason she is in the Singout program is because it shows others what she stands for. "I stand for Christ and what He can do for a person." She continues, "I like 'Natural High' because it's just real — it's alive — it just tells it like it is, pointing to God. It shows He's the real thing and the answer."

"Natural High" will be presented to the public today and Sunday at 3 and 8 p. m. There will be no admission charge. Both performances will be in the Shelby High School gymnasium.

During the performances come the answers that not all the singers could reply to in a newspaper article. It answers the student who wonders if the singers "really believed in what they were singing." And it answers why they sing. Because...

"Someone loved me first, I didn't even know His name. But he turned me on to something real

And I know for you He'll do the same, the very same.

It's not a question of my rights

And least of all how good am I;

It's only that I really care, Care about the other guy."

The young people of Cleveland County are into a new ministry. And it's catching on fire.

"Why am I in Singout? I could tell you how it makes me feel — like I'm gonna burst inside, and how I want to cry when it's over — but I'd rather tell you that I know it's God using us to spread His love."

This response is from Cindy Vassy, a Shelby High senior. She continues, "It makes me feel closer to God to sing to people; it's a way of witnessing. Maybe there's somebody out there that's feeling kinda bad or something. Maybe we can help them out by sharing God's love with them."